

Deputy Chancellor

Dr John O'Donnell has made exemplary contributions to the high quality of health services in Queensland, driving closer integration of care, education and research that is fundamental to improved patient outcomes.

Adelaide-born, he began his evolution as a health professional and administrator by working as an 18-year-old assistant nurse in country South Australia. This vacation work helped fund his studies at The University of Adelaide and also opened his eyes to the immense possibilities of a career in health. He switched from studying Science to Medicine, graduated in 1979, and worked for several years in hospital and general practice in South Australia and Canada.

In the 1980s a vacancy for a training position in hospital management caught his eye – and so began a dynamic career in administration. By July 2015, when he stepped down as Chief Executive Officer of Mater Misericordiae Health Service Brisbane, he was one of Australia's longest-serving medical administrator-CEOs. He had overseen health business model transformations in Southeast Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.

In Brisbane, 14 years of Dr O'Donnell's leadership saw Mater Health remain true to the Sisters of Mercy's founding principles of providing compassionate care for the most needy, while also espousing patient-centric innovations in education and research. Clinical services, teaching and research were integrated under a single governance structure, as high-quality research cemented its place at the centre of Mater culture.

The organisation grew to have 7000-plus staff and volunteers and revenue of \$1.1 billion. Its achievements ranged from Australia's first in-utero surgery to correct twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, to listing as a BRW top 100 Australian private company.

Dr O'Donnell's era saw the renewal of Mater's original 1948 agreement with The University of Queensland, and the start of several new initiatives involving UQ. These include the UQ-Mater Nursing and Midwifery Alliance (with a School of Nursing and Midwifery at Redland and a Clinical School in Mater's Whitty Building); the Mater Research Institute-UQ Alliance; and the Translational Research Institute (in which Mater played a formative role).

A compounding effect of Dr O'Donnell's influence is that UQ graduates in medicine, nursing, midwifery and allied health gain Mater clinical experience, adding team work and holistic care to their fine preparation as highly-effective clinicians; health professionals, researchers and educators.

In short, Dr O'Donnell's actions have supported UQ's commitment to the development of exceptional graduates, and to the conduct of excellent research that translates into improved patient outcomes. The key beneficiaries are, and will continue to be, patients.

His contributions continue, through many appointments such as a UQ adjunct professorship, directorship of Catholic Health Australia, and chairmanship of Mercy Community Services and Proton Therapy Australia.

Deputy Chancellor, I present to you Dr John O'Donnell, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery of The University of Adelaide, Master of Health Planning of the University of New South Wales, Diploma in Obstetrics of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators, Honorary Fellow of the Australasian College of Health Service Management, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, for the award of Doctor of Medicine *honoris causa*, bestowed by the Senate of The University of Queensland.